

Twenty-fourth session
New York, 20 and 31 August 2007

Item 4 of the Provisional Agenda
Reports of liaison officers

The ICOS Terminology Group

The ICOS Terminology Group was established at the meeting of the ICOS Board of Directors in Prague (26-27 March 2004). Its members are: Terhi Ainiala (Finland), Pierre-Henri Billy (France), Dunja Brozović Rončević (Croatia), Enzo Caffarelli (Italy), Ana María Cano González (Spain), Richard Coates (United Kingdom), Doreen Gerritzen (Netherlands), Albrecht Greule (Germany), Milan Harvalík (Czech Republic; chair), Naftali Kadmon (Israel), Martina Pitz (France), Mats Wahlberg (Sweden). The members of this group are representatives of particular languages, countries, regions and onomastics schools and collaborate with other onomasticians, e.g. from Croatia, Finland, Italy, Latvia, Russia and South Africa.

The first goal of the group was to produce a multilingual dictionary of a relatively small number of key onomastic terms. With regard to the long traditions of the use of terms established in various onomastic schools, the major work of the Group did not lie in a unification that would strictly eliminate or suppress existing terms in current use and introduce other ones. Therefore the first step of the work (2004-2005) only consisted of a thorough examination of contemporary usage, i.e. a predominantly descriptive approach.

In 2004 basic onomastic terms were collected. The choice of terms was discussed during the onomastic workshop in Zadar in September 2004. Then the definitions and examples were added, based on excerpts from onomastic publications and dictionaries. In this way, a list of key onomastic terms, including approximately 80 items, was compiled. The intention was to give simple explanations that would be clear both to scholars and laymen, but, at the same time, also to point out differences between particular existing definitions. During the meeting of the ICOS Board of Directors in Brighton (1-2 April 2005) a session of the Terminology Group was organised, where all the items of the list were thoroughly discussed again. The comments on the list were taken into consideration and the final version was prepared.

This list of key onomastic terms (in English, French and German) was presented at the 22nd International Congress of Onomastic Sciences in Pisa (28.8. - 3.9. 2005) and it is planned to publish it on the official ICOS website soon. The vast majority of terms relates to particular classes and types of proper names (e.g. first name, hydronym, toponym); in the next stage of the work special attention will be paid to those terms that are connected with the theory and methodology of onomastics, although it is in precisely these cases that the biggest inconsistencies and discrepancies between various languages and onomastic schools are to be expected. In order to make the list understandable to as many visitors of the website as possible, further versions are planned in a variety of languages (e.g. Italian, Russian and Spanish).

This terminological dictionary will serve as a handbook for easier orientation in national onomastic terminologies and, at the same time, forms the springboard for the next phase of the work of the ICOS Terminology Group, when, on the basis of the analyses of particular designations and their definitions, it will be possible to proceed with enactment, or rather to proceed to recommendations on which terms should be used and with which meanings they should be used.

[A preliminary terminology web-page has been established on the ICOS web-site http://www.icosweb.net/, and this will be replaced as soon as possible by a page based on the Terminology Group's deliberations. Only practical considerations have prevented this from happening already.](http://www.icosweb.net/)